
Senate Bill 71

Date: January 9, 2020
Committee: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
Bill Title: State Board of Pilots - Sunset Extension
Re: **Letter of Support**

Senate Bill 71 extends the sunset provision of the State Board of Pilots (board) from July 1, 2022 to July 1, 2032, to ensure continued management of the licensed bay pilots that navigate ships through Maryland's waterways.

Pursuant to Maryland law, each American vessel engaged in foreign trade, and each foreign vessel, must employ a licensed pilot when the vessel is moving through Maryland's navigable waters, including when the vessel is towing or being towed by another vessel. The board's role in ensuring the safe and competent practice of pilots is vital to Maryland's economy and the safety of Maryland's environment.

The board currently licenses and regulates pilots who pilot vessels on the navigable waters of the state and ensures that Maryland's pilots are qualified, licensed individuals capable of providing appropriate pilotage. Moreover, the board selects and appoints the number of pilots-in-training it considers necessary to protect the commercial interests of the state. Appointment as a pilot-in-training authorizes the individual to engage in training under the supervision of a licensed pilot.

In 2010, the board's termination provision was extended for twelve (12) years. At that time, the Department of Legislative Services found that the Board was effectively accomplishing their statutory duty of ensuring the safe passage of ships through the Chesapeake Bay and Chesapeake and Delaware (C&D) Canal. Moreover, DLS recommended that continued regulation of pilotage is necessary to ensure public safety.

The board currently manages 74 active pilot licenses and works to ensure that every pilot is providing safe and appropriate services that meet Maryland's standards. **For this reason, the Department respectfully requests a favorable report from the committee on Senate Bill 71.**